

THE SECRET PATH

*A Technique of Spiritual Self-
Discovery for the Modern World*

BY

PAUL BRUNTON

AUTHOR OF

"A SEARCH IN SECRET INDIA"

THIRD IMPRESSION

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FOREWORD

TO-DAY an interesting change has come over Western thought. We can discuss the fact of the soul without being considered either unduly religious or mildly unbalanced. We affirm or deny the existence of the self as freely as we discuss the atom or the sources of history. This is a significant step forward and indicates a growing sensitivity to that "mysterious Overself" referred to by our author.

Modern psychologists can be broadly divided into those who affirm the presence of a controlling integrating self within the body-nature, and those who affirm only the existence of the mechanical form. Is there a self? Is there a subjective reality? Is there such a thing as spiritual consciousness? This is the problem before investigators to-day in the field of human awareness. Can the hidden self be proved and people be induced to tread the secret path to the holy place, where the self can be discovered?

The timeliness of this book is real. It expresses, with a beautiful clarity, truths which have been too often hidden under ponderous phrase, difficult Oriental symbolism, and mystical vaguenesses. It will be welcomed by those

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ALICE A. BAILEY,
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CHAPTER I

WITH A WISE MAN OF THE EAST

SOME years ago I wandered for awhile through sun-baked Oriental lands, intent on discovering the last remnants of that "mystic East" about which most of us often hear, but which few of us ever find. During those journeyings I met an unusual man who quickly earned my profound respect and received my humble veneration. For although he belonged by tradition to the class of Wise Men of the East, a class which has largely disappeared from the modern world, he avoided all record of his existence and disdained all efforts to give him publicity.

Time rushes onward like a roaring stream, bearing the human race with it and drowning our deepest thoughts in its noise. Yet this sage sat apart, quietly ensconced upon the grassy bank, and watched the gigantic spectacle with a calm Buddha-like smile. The world wants its great men to

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I would understand life, not merely grumble at it ! He interested me much, despite the fact that his wisdom was not of a kind which is easily apparent and despite the strong reserve which encircled him. He broke his habitual silence only to answer questions upon such recondite topics as the nature of man's soul, the mystery of God, the strange powers which lie unused in the human mind, and so on, but when he did venture to speak I used to sit enthralled as I listened to his soft voice under a burning tropic sun or pale crescent moon. For authority was vested in that calm voice and inspiration gleamed in those luminous eyes. Each phrase that fell from his lips seemed to contain some precious fragment of essential truth. The theologians of a stuffer century taught the doctrine of man's original sin ; but this Adept taught the doctrine of man's original goodness.

In the presence of this sage one felt security and inward peace. The spiritual radiations which emanated from him were all-penetrating. I learnt to recognize in his person the sublime truths which he taught, while I was no less hushed into reverence by his incredibly sainted atmosphere. He possessed a deific personality which defies description. I might have taken shorthand notes of the discourses of this sage ; I might even print the record of his speech ; but the most important part of his utter-

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myself with one thing and another, and quite lately prepared to return to the East once more. I purposed no less a thing than an exploration right across Asia, an exploration that would continue my old quest of the last surviving exponents of genuine Oriental wisdom and magic. I hoped to wander through the yellow deserts of Egypt and among the wisest sheikhs of Syria; to mingle with the vanishing fakirs of remote Iraq villages; to question the old Sufi mystics of Persia in mosques with graceful bulbous domes and tapering minarets; to witness the marvels performed by Yogi magicians under the purple shadows of Indian temples; to confer with the wonder-working lamas of Nepal and the Tibetan border; to sit in the Buddhist monasteries of Burma and Ceylon, and to engage in silent telepathic conversation with century-old yellow sages in the Chinese hinterland and the Gobi desert.

My kit was almost packed, my last few papers were being put in order, and I was nearly ready to leave. I turned my face away from the crowded streets of the great city in which I lived.

"London is a roost for every bird," wrote shrewd Disraeli, and I must be one who is somewhat old-fashioned. I like the quiet London of eighteenth-century streets and dignified old railed-in squares and I regard them as welcome oases in a

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solitary rural silence that I have often felt more at ease than in many a city drawing-room, and it is when companioned by such silvery beeches that I have often felt a more beautiful and sincere presence than with many human beings.

It was the mellow autumn season, and all around me were the gold and green tinted leaves which lie down to die in such profusion when the life of the year begins to fail. The late afternoon sun shone generously upon everything around. The hours slipped past one another, the soft murmur of a few insects rose and died away as they flew through the air, but still the pen lay motionless between my fingers. One waits beside the silent shore of the mind for the coming of exalted moods whose fragile bodies are as gossamer. So soft are they that if one does not cast one's net aright, the rough cords of mortal tongue will slay the tiny wanderers with brutal touch, and so shy are they that one must sometimes wait long before the first timorous alien will venture into the net. But once a few captives have been gathered together, the reward descends rich upon one's heart.

In this spiritual element lie all the fragrant hopes of man, waiting, like so many unplucked flowers, for the soft hands which shall garner them for a sightless people. These visitations of a loftier mood provide one with jewels for one's writings.

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Wise One of the East, appeared before me, his grave bearded face as clear, as recognizable as though it were there in the flesh. Certainly he came to me with a tread which was as silent as the fall of fresh dew. I made the humble obeisance of my heart in veneration and greeting. His strange eyes turned remonstratingly upon me.

He said gently : "*My son, it is not well. Hast thou forgotten compassion? Shalt thou go forth to add to thy store of knowledge while others starve for the crumbs of wisdom? Wilt thou commune with the Divine Ones when there are those who look for God but perceive only the impassable barrier of the sky : when there are those who throw their prayers to a void which returns no answer? Stay thy feet if needs be but forget not thy fellows in distress. Leave not for the lands of waving palms until thou hast well regarded these words. May peace be ever with thee !*"

And, thereupon, without another word, he passed out of my vision, as silently and as mysteriously as he had appeared.

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When I became aware of my environment, I could barely see the trees again for it was grown dark ; the light had faded out of the day, and the scintillating stars were coming to birth in the sky.

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If the privilege of sitting at the feet of forgotten but none the less potent gods is indeed high, then the travail of carrying their message to an unheeding yet suffering people is just as high, just as noble. Perhaps no man's mind is so clothed in ugliness that a few faint gleams of hidden beauty do not trouble him now and again and cause him to raise his head a little towards the stars, sometimes in perplexity at the meaning of it all, sometimes in wonder at the ceaseless harmony of the spheres

"Forget not thy fellows in distress," my strange visitant had told me

What then could I do? I could not tarry overmuch in this Western country and neglect my trans-Asiatic expedition, for which the pressure of fate and the pull of inclination had conspired to smooth my path. How then, for the sake of one's fellows, could one assume the prophetic mantle

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book. For it would also hold the lingering echoes of many happy hours spent in sublime peace; it would more than hint at the ecstatic enjoyment of diviner states which are open to man No, it need not be a joyless book, indeed it could not be. The flowers must drop their petals, one by one, the moon waxes and must wane, even the lark's fine song must one day be stilled; but I have found a Land where strange flowers grow, and grow for ever; where the sky's light is never less; and where all things sing an immortal music that has not ceased since time began

Thus the pages which follow took their genesis. If they seem to consist of little more than a collection of scattered thoughts loosely tied together, I must ask the pardon and indulgence of the reader. For I gather my written thoughts in the motley; they are always disjointed and come only in fragments. I stand ashamed before the facile orations of other men, whose sequences flow like a stream of oil. This halting utterance of mine I attribute to a natural impulse of my mind to enter into a state of rest, rather than to enter into a state of activity. There is a war in my heaven every time I take up my pen, which has accepted the limitations with which it was born and does not aspire towards a better technique.

It will be observed that there is very little

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any fixed system, which you have to swallow by an act of faith. They aim at being suggestive. They try to challenge you to think for yourself. They provide you with mental nuts to crack in the form of unusual questions. You can create a new system of ideas for yourself by musing upon these pages, but it will be your own system, not another's. Such thoughts as these may begin by startling you, but they may end by stimulating you, I do not know.

I am not writing for the benefit of the man who has already put up the shutters of his mind and firmly fixed them, in case the light of a few new ideas might stream in and disturb his sleep. I am writing for the few who amid the modern muddle of bewildering doctrines have placed their feet upon tentative ground because there seems no safer place in sight.

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Those who look for plenty of facts in this book will not find them; there are thousands of books which will give them all the facts they can ever want; and better still there is the voluminous Book of Life which they can always consult and in which they can always verify every statement I have made. My aim has been to give the soul of all these facts; I have tried to sum up in one flash

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find their faith rewarded by time, who will likewise pay their credulity with first-hand knowledge.

My confidence stands serene and unshaken that I can make good my thesis against all comers, but only if they are prepared to undertake the same psychological experiments which I undertook. The thoughts I now give out did not come to me after long argument, they came after long experience. Whoever, therefore, would understand them aright, must be willing to invite the same experience, and this will come readily enough if he is as keen on finding truth as he is on his other and more mundane affairs.

If, therefore, I find the spiritual life no less substantial than the material one, so can every reader of this book. I possess no especial privilege which other human beings do not possess; I can claim no magic gift which has not been fought for by continued effort. What I have found within myself is precisely what anyone else, even a hardened Chicago gangster, may find in his own self too.

If the phrases of this book are occasionally fervent and sometimes heated, this can be explained only because it is a transcript from life, not a collection of academical theories evolved amid the quiet cloisters of a Cambridge. Can no one be a good philosopher unless he writes coldly, as

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some value to them. The fact that the millions of men and women around me are preoccupied with matters of another order invites me to remind them that they and their activities shall shortly or at length vanish from this globe, but that there is a way open for them leading to the eternal life which is enduring treasure.

Some will label me as of that dwindling crowd of dreamers who think to find a starry height in man. They will not be wrong, but I would beg them to realize that they can make my dream their own reality. The way I have followed may be aside from the common one, but it is not so far off that more cannot tread it also. If a foolish age calls us a band of mere dreamers, we at least have the consolation of knowing that we dream while they sleep in dire spiritual unconsciousness.

Others will ask: "Can this Light be followed in the midst of present-day sorrows and sufferings?" To them I would say: "This is precisely the time when its divine worth can best be proved."

There are certain essential truths about life, certain fundamental and unalterable principles which govern living, which have been known to the wise of all ages from the farthest antiquity till the present day. Healing can be found for *all*. No man is so broken, so oppressed by burdens of ill-health, poverty and unhappiness, but there is

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CHAPTER II

MAN—SCIENCE'S GREATEST RIDDLE !

“ Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great .
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between ; in doubt to act, or rest ;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast ;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer ;
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err ,

Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd,
The glory, jest and riddle of the world ! ”

POPE'S *Essay on Man*

THE philosopher sits in the gallery of the Theatre of Life, looking down upon the play being enacted on the distant stage. It may be this exteriorized position which enables him to pass adequate judgments upon it all. Those who sit in the stalls at the Passing Show of This World

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warnings or wise counsel—we dismiss such as the fervid vapourings of cranks, just as the Jews dismissed Christ's pointed truths. In the result men wander helplessly amid the bewildering chaos of to-day. We rise from the cradle of birth and grasp at life with passionate hands, but soon sink back into the passionless grave.

Our little selves are all-absorbed with the importance of our struggles and aspirations, our triumphs and defeats. Our luring possessions hold us captive, and we fret or fever ourselves on their account. We cannot help that, for we are human. But the Sphinx, rising out of Egyptian sands and surveying the mortal race of men, smiles . . . and smiles . . . and smiles !

Yet man is a rational being and instinctively craves for a rational explanation of things. He lives in a predominantly scientific and intellectual age. All his experience is interpreted by the light of a purely materialistic reason. But life appears to draw a hard line upon the map of his own nature, leaving a vast unknown land where Reason seems unable to penetrate. Reading in one of Bertrand Russell's old essays his fine but pessimistic confession of faith, I take it as typical of the sterile attitude forced upon those scientists who refuse all hope of ever exploring the unknown land. He wrote : " That man is the product of causes which

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has always gone, where alone it can go. We must go to the Seers and Sages. Whilst the scientists have been searching the material universe for fresh facts, the Seers have been searching their own selves and exploring their own minds for old truths; for they have come to realize that they can but recover the ancient wisdom of man. What the first Seer found and recorded thousands of years ago, the last Seer finds and agrees with to-day. But what the first scientist of the nineteenth century found and recorded, the last scientist of to-day laughs at and flings aside. The latest results of science have already laid the frigid speculations of mid-Victorian scientists in a deep tomb. Yet the scientist is so sainted by the race to-day that unless and until he nods approval to each separate revelation of the Seer—a process which has been going on under our very eyes this last half-century—the pearl is thrown to the dust as false. Living scientists who can hardly be called dreamers now lend their names to the ideas of the Seers.

Bishop Berkeley's major doctrine was a similar view to that of the Indian Absolutists. He asserted that all we know of the world is our reaction to it, our impressions of it. He made mind the measuring-rod of the reality of our universe and hence placed mind as the first and fundamental reality. Sir James Jeans, by some brilliant efforts, has shown

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of consciousness. We must first create within ourselves a true humility before we can know the liberating TRUTH. We must enter with Descartes, the clever Frenchman, into that frame of mind wherein he began one of his works: "I have held much to be true, which I now discover to be false; I have no reason to suppose anything to be more certain. Possibly everything that I conceive and believe is false. What then is true; what is certain?"

Thus the old mechanistic conception of life which was established by the founders of modern science from the seventeenth century onwards has begun to die out in the laboratory and lecture-room. The physicists themselves—once the proponents of the gospel of matter—have now become uncomfortably uncertain of physical phenomena. Their extended researches have shown them that what they once called inanimate matter can display certain properties which the text-books lay down as hitherto considered peculiar to the organic alone. This is the tragedy of time—it tests all things and ideas and proves again and again the falsity of the current conceptions of the moment.

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When Einstein showed what a weird twist the sun's rays undergo before reaching our globe, the scientific lights which were guiding us dimmed a little and men grew wary of jumping to conclude the obvious. So, too, the psychology of fifty years ago looks a little woeful at the present time. The studies in abnormal psychology alone have played havoc with the seemingly sound explanations of that time.

The new order of scientific inquirers who now concern themselves with problems of time and causality, especially the mathematical physicists, have opened up entirely new vistas.

Einstein has also taught us to look upon time as another dimension, though we have hardly grasped the full import of this revolutionary idea. And if his later work is leading him anywhere, it is leading him to regard mind as the ultimate reality.

We live in an age of applied science : knowledge comes first ; belief is but secondary. We probe every fact or event in this world with a searching "Why?" There is a cause for every visible effect. The old times when a baffling event was explained by a reference to the Will of God, or to the fiat of an angel, are gone, and gone for good. Spiritual truth must henceforth stand upon a scientific

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Science has made the strides of a giant, but all her steps are in one direction—outwards, ever outwards. This is as it should be. Now the time has come to put an inside to her discoveries, to ensoul the forms she has created.

Is the soul a mere academic concept, an intellectual plaything for the professors to accept or deny? Is it only something upon which theologians may victoriously sustain their theses, and at which rationalists may fire their verbal shrapnel? At present the scientists can find no chemical trace of the soul; he cannot make it register on any of his instruments as he can make a gas register. But if chemical and mechanical reactions cannot be obtained, he need not therefore give up the quest baffled. Another way lies open. It may not be a

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Time will necessarily lift the idea of the soul out of the limbo of discarded theological notions into the grouping of scientifically tested propositions. But the science of that day will perhaps be as ready to utilize the mind as an experimenting instrument as to-day it uses the microscope. What are now regarded as the foolish illusions of mystics will then be the verified truths of the science of *para-psychology, to be publicly proclaimed without reserve*

That the twentieth century will unveil somewhat of this mystery who that has followed the gropings of science can doubt. During its very first decade, the penetrating brain of the French thinker, Bergson, flashed the following prophetic message to his pen: "To explore the most sacred depths of the unconscious, to labour in the subsoil of consciousness: that will be the principal task of psychology in the century which is opening. I do not doubt that wonderful discoveries await it there."

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I would like to have lived in Athens at the time when one could wander into the market-place and hear a certain snub-nosed, pugnacious man, one Socrates, cross-question the public men of the city, and repeatedly pose them this favourite question of his. A man like Socrates does not die and his sublime character outlives the grave.

When all the latest literatures have been examined and all the earliest papyri have been exhumed, we shall find no wiser precept than the Delphic Oracle's injunction, "Know thyself!" and the Indian Rishies' counsel to "Inquire into the Self." These words, though older than the mummies in the British Museum, might have come from the typewriter of a modern thinker. The ages cannot kill a truth, and the first man who phrased it will find his echo right down through the centuries.

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We live on a whirling ball in space, positioned somewhere in the great sky between the star of Venus and the star of Mars. There is something in this for man to think about and something at which to laugh. He has measured with undeniable

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Compared with its other results, modern science has discovered very little about the nature of man, even though it has discovered how to harden metals, how to drive a half-ton shell into the next city, and a hundred lesser things. During the last three centuries man's knowledge of the physical world has grown with amazing acceleration, but his knowledge of himself lingers far behind.

We can build giant bridges to span rivers of monstrous width, but we are unable to span the simple problem of "Who am I?" Our railway engines will traverse a whole continent with ease, but our minds cannot traverse the mystery of self. The astronomer brings the farthest star to the sight of his observatory, but he himself will bow his head in shame if you ask him whether he has brought his passions under complete control. We are full of curiosity concerning our planet, but we walk indifferently by at the mention of self.

We have gathered highly detailed information about almost everything under the sun; we know the work, qualities and properties of almost all the objects and phenomena of this earth.

But we do not know our selves.

The very persons who have been studying all the sciences have yet to study the science of self; the very men who have discovered the why and wherefore of the lives of tiny insects do not know the

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as babes ; it will be the last thing we shall know as sages.

The greatest certainty in knowledge comes only in the sphere of self. We can know the world and its objects only through instruments and our senses ; but that which reads those instruments and uses those senses is the self. Therefore we are beaten back to this position in the end, that the study of self is the most important study to which any thinker can give his mind.

A Sophist approached one of the Wise Men of ancient Greece, and thought to puzzle him with the most perplexing questions. But the Sage of Miletus was equal to the test for he replied to them all, without the least hesitation yet with the utmost exactitude.

1. What is the oldest of all things ?

“ *God*, because He has always existed.”

2. What is the most beautiful of all things ?

“ *The Universe*, because it is the work of God ”

3. What is the greatest of all things ?

“ *Space*, because it contains all that has been created.”

4. What is the most constant of all things ?

“ *Hope*, because it still remains with man, after he has lost everything else.”

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CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERIOUS OVERSELF

“ Remote, yet near, unutterably aged, lone,
He sits within the temple’s inner shrine,
With folded hands and countenance divine,
Omniscient, inscrutable, unknown ”

G. P. WILLIAMSON

SAINTS and sages, thinkers and philosophers, priests and scientific inquirers have tried for centuries to understand the enigmatic nature of the human soul. They find man a paradoxical being, one capable of descent into the darkest abysses of evil, and yet equally capable of ascent to the sublimest heights of nobility. They discover two creatures within his breast—one related to the demons and the other related to the angels. So wonderfully constituted is man that he can develop out of his own nature all that is most admirable equally with all that is most reprehensible in life.

Are we mere lumps of animated matter? Has man no higher birth than the flesh?

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These are the riddles of life which have puzzled the sages of sixty generations, and will puzzle *many* more. The cleverest minds, the ablest pens and the most eloquent lips have busied themselves with these dark enigmas, but still mankind gropes for the answers.

Man—a doubting and despairing figure—stalks across the cold wastes of this world and laughs cynically at the name of God. But despair is the stricken child of ignorance.

God has sent a true light into the heart of every child that is born, but it must be unveiled. We have wrapped around it the dark shrouds that blind us, and we ourselves must unwrap them. No cry that goes up from the depths of a sincere heart goes up in vain, and if your prayer is fashioned aright, it will be answered by the god in your own heart.

The average man sends out his tentacles towards Life, feeling his way towards something he does not quite comprehend. He has hardly perceived that when he begins to apply his intelligence to the solution of his own problem—himself—he will automatically solve the parallel problems of God, Life, the Soul, Happiness, and so on.

The white race has wandered all over the surface of this earth in search of new Americas till there is hardly a rod of land upon which it has not set foot. Yet I purpose to indicate here another world, which

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Throughout the verbal traditions handed down by our earlier forefathers, and shining through the literature of the world, far back as the first rude manuscripts of Oriental peoples and up to the newest product of the printer's press of this year of grace, there has been a strange yet recurring allusion to another self within man. It does not matter what name was given to this mysterious self, whether it be called soul or breath, spirit or ghost. There is, indeed, no other doctrine in the world which possesses so far-flung an intellectual ancestry as this.

Everybody knows that there is a fixed limit to the range within which normal human consciousness can function. Everybody does not know that there have always been some intrepid humans who have played the King Canute to their own minds—bidding the turbulent waves of thought roll back until consciousness crossed the normal limit and found itself in the free worlds of the spirit.

These statements of experience made by spiritual Seers throughout the ages must be faced. They are either the babblings of irresponsible lunatics, or they are words of such importance as to upset the present materialistic basis of our life.

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They are all that is left of the site where once the festivals of the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated in pomp and reverence under the ægis of Athens. There are few to-day who understand what went on behind the walls of this sanctuary. Initiation into these Mysteries was esteemed a subject of high importance among the ancients, though we moderns hardly know what it means. Men like Macedonian Alexander and Roman Julius Cæsar did not hesitate to avail themselves of this sublime and unforgettable experience, and emerged to fulfil more consciously the great parts which destiny had allotted them, such was the grandeur of the knowledge which came to them behind closed and guarded doors.

When the epiphanies of the Greek Mysteries were concluded, the last words heard by the initiate were: "*Go in peace!*" And it is written by those who were themselves initiated that ever after he went his way through life with a soul at rest and mind serene. Initiation was really nothing more than to enter into an awareness of what the candidate really was. It completed the make-up of man and anyone who had not experienced it was really but a half-man. Something, some broken fragments of what he learnt in those old temples I have put into this book, but I have attempted to formulate these hoary old truths in language which will appeal to

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There exists in Central America an almost exactly similar structure to the Egyptian Pyramid, and one which was used by the ancients for exactly similar purposes. The mysterious events which took place in the one were duplicated in the other, and what occurred in the Greek Eleusinian Temple was not dissimilar in its results to the results of both. There were several grades of initiation, naturally, but the candidates who succeeded in passing even the first had a new world of being temporarily opened to them and went back to the world as changed men and women, for they had temporarily touched their hidden selves.

If this interior experience was possible in the twentieth century B.C. it is also possible in the twentieth century A.D. The *fundamental* nature of man has not changed during the interval. It is true, however, that the experience was easier found and more often attained in the earlier days because then life was more leisurely and less complicated

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There is something more in man than is apparent from ordinary impressions. The discoveries of abnormal psychology throw out strange hints about this, and the never-ending accounts of mystical experience confirm it. What is this "moreness" in man which causes him to hold fine ideals and to foster great thoughts? What is this finer spiritual presence in his heart which fitfully pulls him away from a merely earthly existence, thus setting up constant strife between the angel and the beast which tenant our body?

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“ But what thing dost thou now,
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 ‘ I am I, thou art thou,
 I am low, thou art high ? ’
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him
 Find thou but thyself, thou art I

O my sons, O too dutiful
 Towards Gods not of me,
 Was not I enough beautiful ?
 Was it hard to be free ?
 For behold, I am with you and in you and
 of you, look forth now, and see.”
Hertha, by ALGERNON C SWINBURNE

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There are those who will express disdain at this ego-centric philosophy. Then I shall answer, not with my own words, but with the inspired announcement of the German seer, Eckhardt, “ *God is at the centre of man* ”

Does one blaspheme against God in thus deifying the self? Only the superficial can make this accusation. For the true soul of man is Divinity; there can be no blasphemy in such an attitude.

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I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him
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O my sons, O too dutiful
Towards Gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful?
Was it hard to be free?
For behold, I am with you and in you and
of you, look forth now, and see."
Hertha, by ALGERNON C SWINBURNE

§

There are those who will express disdain at this ego-centric philosophy. Them I shall answer, not with my own words, but with the inspired announcement of the German seer, Eckhardt, "*God is at the centre of man*"

Does one blaspheme against God in thus deifying the self? Only the superficial can make this accusation. For the true soul of man is Divinity; there can be no blasphemy in such an attitude.

he dropped off all passions and personal emotions entirely, all feelings or desires like fear, anger, hatred, lust and the like. But thoughts still played in his consciousness, still arose like waves upon the surface of his mind and still connected themselves with his personal life. And so we trace him back to a time when even thoughts took their exit and when the necessity of thinking in a sequential logical manner in order to obtain understanding, disappeared. Not only did he no longer need the reasoning faculty, but it even became a hindrance to him. For man had now reached the naked condition of pure Selfhood.

The whole matter might perhaps be put more plainly by saying that the human race, in the course of its long history, has superimposed a second self upon the individual nature with which each man began. This second self is usually called the person and came into being through a union of spirit and matter, through a commingling of particles of consciousness drawn from the ever-conscious real self with particles of unconscious matter drawn from the body. This second and later self is the one we each of us know, the personal self, but the first and real self, which existed before thinking and desiring appeared within the being of man, is the one which few of us know, which is subtle and not so apparent because it makes us

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Underneath all, individuals
I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores
individuals. . . .

The whole theory of the universe is directed un-
erringly to one single individual—namely to
You.”

And this from Whitman’s poem *To You* :

“O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about
you !
You have not known what you are, you have
slumbered upon yourself all your life.
The mockeries are not you ,
Underneath them and within them I see you lurk.
Whoever you are, claim your own ”

There are memorable moments in our lives
when we receive from the Overself hints of a
higher existence possible to man. At such times
our house of life is unshuttered and slender rays
of dawn enter in. We know then that the soul’s
dreams can come true, that Love and Truth and
Happiness are indeed our birthright, but, alas !
the brief hour passes and with it our faith. Are
they then to be of no worth to us, those shining
lapses into a diviner existence? Let them stand
as “pillars of cloud by day, pillars of fire by night,”
to guide us through the wilderness of modern
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he himself was being sought for as the heir to a great fortune. Wrapped in the folds of our own nature hides a rare jewel, though we know it not. None has yet dared to set a price upon it, nor will any ever dare to do so, for its value is beyond all things of known worth.

We must try, then, to trace out the Overself, to run down the gamut of our inner workings till we can get no farther. Then we shall realize that body and intellect are not our be-all, but that the Overself is the witness of both, the source of complete peace, perfect intelligence and absolute immortality.

We of this practical century have little confidence in abstract propositions. We are always dubious about thoughts which carry us away from the concrete world. We distrust and deprecate theoretical systems which take their start out of the air.

The question will be asked: "Do you possess any practical method whereby we may attain this self-knowledge which you praise so much? Or is yours but a speculative doctrine which may make a nice adornment to the façade of metaphysics but is without utility to men who work, live, love and suffer? Is it but a dreamy fancy which cannot hold out against the grim actualities of modern city life?"

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CHAPTER IV

THE PRACTICE OF MENTAL QUIET

THE sovereignty of nature has been allotted to the silent forces. The moon makes not the faintest echo of a noise, yet it draws millions of tons of tidal waters to and fro at its bidding. We do not hear the sun rise nor the planets set. So, too, the dawning of the greatest moment in a man's life comes quietly, with none to herald it to the world. In that stillness alone is born the knowledge of the Overself. The gliding of the mind's boat into the lagoon of the spirit is the gentlest thing I know; it is more hushed than the fall of eventide.

Only in deep silence may we hear the voice of the soul; argument but beclouds it and too much speech stops its appearance. When you have caught your fish you may share it, but while you are angling for it, talk breaks the spell and frightens the fish away. If we could occupy ourselves less with the activities of the larynx and more with the activities of the deeper mind, we might arrive

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Something of a thrill passed through the learned world when Einstein announced his discovery of the curvature of a ray of light passing near the sun. This observation was to establish his theory of Relativity, but at the time we all thought it might lead to much more than that. We thought that with a little more research along the same lines, and a little more speculation about the results of that research, the existence of God might be brought within the range of scientific proof. Alas! that eager anticipation, which filled so many minds and touched so many pious hearts, has receded somewhat during the years. Science can still deliver no certain verdict on this question.

The greatest problems of individual existence, the supreme questions which haunt the life of every earnest man, cannot be solved within the few inches which confine the human brain. But satisfying answers for them are waiting for us in the limitless interior of our being, in the divine substance of our hidden nature. For the brain can answer only with barren words, whereas the spirit answers with the ravishing experience of internal illumination. Whoever will earnestly put into regular practice the mystical concentration explained in this book, will receive increasing

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We must throw the plummet of mind into the depths of self. The deeper it falls the richer will be the treasure we shall recover from that calm Saragossan sea. Consciousness must be pivoted at the inmost point of one's being. Each man has a private door opening on to the eternal brightness. If he will not press and push it open, his darkness is self-doomed. //

If you want proof of your divinity listen in to your Overself, for that proof is within you. Take a little time out of your leisure to shut out the tumultuous distractions of the world and enter into a short seclusion; then listen with patience and attention to the reports of your own mind in the manner which I shall shortly explain. Repeat this practice every day, and one day that proof will suddenly visit your solitude. And with it will come a glorious freedom when the burdens of man-made theologies or man-made scepticisms will go out from you. Learn to touch your Overself—and you will never again be drawn into those futile circles where men raise the dust of theological argument or make the noise of intellectual debate. In this way you will finally settle the question for yourself, independently of what any book may say about it, no matter how sacred or secular it be.

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Beyond the commonplace trivialities of the daily round, there is a finer and fairer existence.

However much we may resist this diviner claim upon us during the day, we are unable to resist returning to the inner self during deep dreamless sleep. Then we are captured by the soul ; then we enjoy rest in our own nature, albeit unconsciously. It is an arresting thought, this, and a hint of high philosophic truth.

But how can a people enslaved by the trials and tumults of material life become aware of this wonderful truth ? Therefore it is that those who are wise take up the daily practice of calming the mind and withdrawing it into the deep abiding peace that lies hidden within us.

General Gordon regularly set one hour aside every morning for his spiritual devotions ; how much inspiration for his soldierly activities, how much strength and courage did he not draw from this wise practice ?

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usual attitude. History shows how religion, to take one example, has produced a number of meditative visionaries who invited others to enter with them into the domain of sheer self-delusion, and to wander into the realm of puerile fancies. It is such misguided persons who have been responsible for the common notion that spiritual seers are men who stand gazing into the heavens, exploring with their mental eyes dim cloudlands of no interest and of no use to saner mortals. They are the sham mystics who live in fantastic worlds of their own: what they need is a hard bump against reality.

But history also tells us of a band of seers who take higher rank. They were men of spotless character and exceptional charity. Their common characteristic was that they had passed through an experience which lit up their minds with untellable illumination and which bestowed ecstatic happiness. These were the true mystics, if you like. Their statements, which were phrased in all humility, revealed that they had penetrated to the inmost regions of man's heart; they had gone into that deeper place where the soul abides; and they had discovered at last the diviner nature of man, which remains untouched and unfallen though tenemented in frail flesh. It is not my purpose to list their names, but the books of Evelyn Underhill and

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Various systems of meditation had been taught, different paths of Yoga have been chalked out in both ancient and modern times. The technique for attaining self-knowledge which is propounded here, however, cannot be brought easily into any of these existing classifications. This Art of Interrogative Self-Reflection stands alone in its simplicity, uniqueness, originality and power, although it naturally has several points of contact with the other systems. I do not claim that it offers the best path, but I do claim that it offers a quicker and safer means of attaining spiritual self-knowledge than most of the paths I know. The various branches of Yoga, that profound but complicated Indian way, are excellent when considered in relation to the people and epoch to whom they were given, but when considered in relation to the Western races and modern needs, they obviously prove too impracticable except for a few.

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will not suffer and our problems will not be neglected. But thereby we create a current of spiritual wisdom and strength which will flow beneath the whole of the day's activities and thoughts. Whatever we do will be done correctly, whatever decision we must reach will be the right one because it will be the fruit of calmer, deeper thought. Those who think it folly to attend to our spiritual attitude before we have attended to our worldly concerns put second things first and first things second. For them, as the Hindu scripture puts it: "There is peace neither in this world nor the next."

Whether we give five minutes or five hours to this practice of life-inspiring, it never fails to produce remarkable rewards in the long run. Is it not worth a quarter to half an hour a day to find mental poise and the consciousness of inner mastery?

This matter of practising meditation for ten minutes to half an hour once or twice a day is merely one of habit, since a person gradually becomes accustomed to it as a part of his normal life. The second fortnight will be slightly easier, the third easier still, until in time you master the art. Even the busy man of affairs can fit it into his programme so that it becomes as natural as having his meal. Create the habit, stick to it, and without

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The next point to observe is that certain physiological and psychological conditions are advisable if success is to be attained with less difficulty. An easy body-posture assists to put the mind at ease. A body in discomfort tends to make the mind uneasy.

Physical stillness is the first gateway to mental stillness. A comfortable and convenient posture of the body rests the mind and enables one to begin the task of withdrawing within oneself. Go to the same quiet spot or room every day, occupy the same chair or sit on the same bed each time. Sit upright and do not recline on your back. Thus the body learns to respond automatically until it becomes non-resistant to the invading influence of the Soul.

Meditation is easier to perform and will bear a better fruit when right conditions are conformed to. Choose a time when you will not be disturbed, when things around you are quiet, when the stomach and digestive organs are at rest, when the body feels comfortable, when the weather is not stormy. If it is also possible, fill your best room with flowers and incense. Put only ennobling and colourful pictures upon its walls. Let those four walls prove a holy of holies to help you

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quickly to its interior quiet than it is able to do during the activity of the daytime. There is a mysterious quality in twilight which links it with the great spiritual currents that Nature releases in regular rhythm.

If the early evening is out of the question, then an alternative time would be just before retiring to rest at night. Failing these three times, you must then avail yourself of whatever half-hour you can steal from the daily schedule.

The fragment of time which you have marked off for this higher purpose is to be used in a manner which completely detaches it from the other activities of the day. Instead of busying yourself with something that draws and fastens your attention upon external matters, you will try to let go of such matters and of other persons, to put them aside for the time being as though they never even existed, and to rule your thoughts and feelings with the ideal of inner calm as your goal. Hitherto you may have given all your attention to the world without. The man who would understand himself must reverse this process and periodically divert that attention to explore the world within.

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peace similar to that which Paul described as passing understanding.

For the five senses cling to the material world like glue; they yearn for contacts with it in the forms of things, people, books, amusements, travel, and activities of every kind. You can only kill the enemy in the moments when the senses are silent. When you think of going into mental rest, the senses immediately begin to object, they cry out against it. They say to you: "We want to stay in our own physical world which we know; we are afraid of this inner spiritual world of mystery and meditation. It is natural for us to cling to the physical world." And so they try their utmost to keep you attached to the material sphere; and that is the true reason why you think you dislike meditation or at any rate shirk it, when the time for it comes. It is the senses that dislike it—not you; therefore, fight them and try to rule them. Mental effort comes first, then comes mental quiet.

(The mastery of mind is the mastery of self.) The soul that can conquer the ever-rising spray of thoughts can put on its captain's uniform and bid its whole nature stand to order. The power to hold on to a train of thought with great tenacity, to grasp it with scorpionic claws and not let go is the power to concentrate and makes MEN. The

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CHAPTER V

A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS

SEATED comfortably in your chair or squatting tailor-fashion on a rug, breathing quietly and evenly, close your eyes and let your thoughts run over the question of what you really are. (1)

You are about to begin your great adventure of self-inquiry.

One key to success in your practice is to think very slowly. The wheel of mind is to be slowed down, and consequently it will be unable to rush around from one thing to another, as it did formerly. Think slowly. Next formulate your words mentally with great care and precision. Choose and select each word accurately. Doing this will clarify your thought, for you cannot find a clear and definite phrase to fit it until you have done so.

First watch your own intellect in its working. Note how thoughts follow one another in endless sequence. Then try to realize that there is someone who thinks. Now ask : "Who is this Thinker ?"

Who is this "I" that sleeps and wakes up ; that

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The world is in a continual condition of flux, and man himself seems to be a mass of changing emotions and thoughts. But if he will take the trouble to make a deep analysis of himself, and to ponder calmly over it, he will eventually discover that there is a part of himself which receives the flow of impressions from the external world, and which receives the feelings and thoughts that arise therefrom. This deeper part is the true being of man, the unseen witness, the silent spectator, the Overself.

There is one thing which no man ever doubts. There is one belief to which every man always clings throughout the varied vicissitudes of life. And that is his own self-existence. He never stops for a moment to ask : "Do I exist?" He accepts it unfailingly.

I exist. That consciousness is real. Throughout life that remains ever. Of this we can be completely certain ; but of its limitation to the fleshly frame we cannot be so certain. Let us, therefore, concentrate entirely upon this certainty—(the reality of self-existence.) Let us endeavour to locate it by confining our attention solely to the notion of self.

This, therefore, forms a good starting-point for

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The world is in a continual condition of flux, and man himself seems to be a mass of changing emotions and thoughts. But if he will take the trouble to make a deep analysis of himself, and to ponder calmly over it, he will eventually discover that there is a part of himself which receives the flow of impressions from the external world, and which receives the feelings and thoughts that arise herefrom. This deeper part is the true being of man, the unseen witness, the silent spectator, the Overself.

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I exist. That consciousness is real. Throughout life that remains ever. Of this we can be completely certain ; but of its limitation to the fleshly frame we cannot be so certain. Let us, therefore, concentrate entirely upon this certainty ~~(the reality~~ of self-existence.) Let us endeavour to locate it by confining our attention solely to the notion of self.

This, therefore, forms a good starting-point for

fact of one's own existence, in some sense, is quite beyond doubt. But as to the sense in which this existence is so certain, there the case is far otherwise," wrote F. H. Bradley, one of England's thinkers and philosophers.

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An analysis of the constitution of man is thus the first step. We begin by descending into ourselves. For at our roots dwells the divine.

Whence comes this consciousness of "I"? It persists underneath all the changing moods of mind; it endures beyond every flux of feeling; it survives accident and conquers time. Does it arise out of our bodies?

No, that cannot be, for abnormal psychology and spiritualism conspire together to tell us that it *is* apart from the flesh. The experiments of men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes and Professor William McDougall and many other competent investigators into psychical research cannot be laughed away. We must look into them and abide by the logical conclusion—however startling this be—or else surrender our search for truth. We dare not omit any data that puts a fresh face on our theories. Whoever will look into the available records—and they are more plentiful

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Nevertheless, our thinking is married to the brain which anatomists handle, but just as human marriages sometimes end in divorce, so is it possible for thought and flesh to end in temporary divorce also. Such a result has been brought about on set purpose by means of hypnotism in the West and by means of Yoga in the East. And in the researches of abnormal psychology and even spiritualism, there are evidences enough that the mind can have an existence of its own apart from the flesh.

It would be as sensible for me to attribute the power of thought to this body of mine, as it would be to attribute it to the ink in this pen. The body is inspired by one who acts no less than these written words are inspired by one who thinks. Yet people who are professedly intelligent, who would think twice and thrice before they would venture to attribute the qualities of mental creation and logical sense to ink, will not hesitate to bestow these qualities upon the body which, being matter, is simply ink in another form! The fact is that few people ever stop to consider this question of selfhood, and hence few people ever arrive at the knowledge of its secret.

We cannot be body alone because, when a man's body is completely stricken with paralysis, even his sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell destroyed, he

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awareness of self whilst asleep is no refutation of this statement. Dream is the bridge between the waking state and the deep sleep state of complete unconsciousness. It represents the threshold which must be crossed if one would penetrate into deep sleep. This last stage is that which one must next consider in order to arrive at a clearer notion of the self.

In the dreamless deep-sleep state I become absolutely unconscious of the body—yet somehow “I” still exist. What is that “I” doing, then, and where is it? When I fall into a dreamless sleep, I forget the world entirely Even the keenest agony of the body is not strong enough to keep me permanently awake, even the very thought “I” is forgotten. But self-existence, though temporarily blotted out, still persists in fact, for I awake later and remember my identity

The American doctor Crile has produced some cases illustrating this principle, drawn from the abnormal conditions produced by the war. In one case he tells how an abandoned church was used as a temporary receiving station for soldiers suffering from terrible wounds. The doctor stole into the church at dead of night and found it perfectly silent. The men had had no sleep for five days and, such was their extreme fatigue that not even their ghastly mutilations could keep them awake, and so

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~~1-1-10~~

You have now been inquiring how to think of "I." You have been cutting a psychological cross-section through your own personality in the endeavour to reveal its true working. You have inquired whether the "I" is the body, and you could not *definitely* find it there. All that you could say with certainty is that it is being used by the self; that the self inheres in it alone you cannot trace with equal certainty.

The sense of being yourself has remained. What is this sense? Can you grasp it?

No, you are forced to penetrate deeper than the body, and to explore the subtler realm of thoughts and feelings in your quest of the self.

Thus, using the scalpel of keen thought, prying into your inner self, you may arrive at the tentative position that the body is only part of your self and that the real essential source of the ego notion has so far not been traced out.

I have given the student only a rough outline of the kind of meditation he is to practise, and not every step of the long trail which he will need to follow upon the consideration of self, and it will be for him to develop these suggestive thoughts into more detail in his own way. It may take him but a few meditations to reach the point where he can accept these conclusions as probably correct, or it may take him a few months of practice. But until

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for all time, but nothing exciting may happen to it; get a burning-glass and concentrate the sun's rays on one spot of that paper and something will soon happen.

You may have discovered, too, that the mind is like a restless monkey, but chain it to the post of a single object; tether it to the stake of one line of thought; then only will the monkey recognize you as its master, and be more ready to obey your orders

Fix your mind firmly upon the subject of these reflections, brace it up to the necessary effort of will and concentration, and do not let disheartenment at apparent failure or slow progress deter you from continuing with the exercise. Thoughts of a totally irrelevant nature are sure to drift into your head in the middle of your practice; memories of recent events will form themselves before your mind's eye; pictures connected with personal associations are likely to intrude; desires, worries, work and what not will enter uninvited and try to hold the field of attention. But as soon as you become aware that the intrusion is out of place, dismiss it and begin at the point where you left off.

It is frequently the early stages of meditation that are the hardest, for then the mind is bombarded by discarded memories, drifting thoughts and emotional disturbances to an extent which

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We must dig with the drill of mind beneath the attraction of the physical world, and try to find the eternal reality which it hides. Then the secret of life, which has baffled the brilliant intellects of illustrious men, will be discovered and become our joyful possession.

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The second stage of your inquiry into the true nature of self should be devoted to subjecting your emotional nature to critical analysis. You have tentatively repudiated the physical body as being the sum total of your "I" consciousness, and so you now turn to the next principal part of yourself.

Are you desire, doubt, hate, anger, like and dislike, passion, lust, hope, fear, or any of the other feelings which sway a man in changing sequence from time to time?

The argument which applies to the sleeping body applies equally to the sleeping emotions. When the latter are utterly quiescent and dead in dreamless sleep, the "I" notion still re-emerges upon waking after the apparent death of the emotions. And when, in the waking state, we sometimes experience moments of complete emotionlessness, the sense of personal being nevertheless remains. To transfer

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Thus you arrive at the tentative position that neither emotion nor the body is your true self. When this point of view commends itself to you, the third stage may be entered. By this time you will have deepened your power of concentration; you will have begun, during the periods of practice, to remove your normal outward consciousness from sight, hearing and feeling into your interior, and to firmly concentrate your thoughts within yourself at such times

The third stage is devoted to a consideration of the question: "Am I the thinking intellect?" Now the intellect usually receives its knowledge through the five senses, or from memory of such sense-channelled knowledge. The truth we expect to find within the domes of the average man's skull is therefore based on external experience.

I put forward what might seem to be an astounding proposition. Assuming that the intellect is not dependent on the flesh for its sole existence, I suggest that it is composed of nothing more than the endless sequence of thoughts, the endless series of ideas, concepts and memories, which normally make up the waking day, and that therefore there is no true selfhood even in the intellect. If all this

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Further, the moods of thought are in a constant process of change. You may believe in one opinion to-day and hold its contrary on the morrow. How can you seize on any set of thoughts and say: "This represents my self," when next year it may misrepresent you? Yet the sense of being yourself, of I, has remained, whereas your outlook might greatly change

Again, when you have been quietly contemplating some matter you feel that something in you is watching the thoughts, something which accepts some of them and rejects others Who is it that thinks? The very fact that you pick and choose among these thoughts indicates that there is a separate unit

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Thoughts surge up ceaselessly and disturb the primal repose of the mind. So long continued has this process become, in the history of man, that we have come to regard it as our normal state. To draw the mind back into a calm rest, much more so to be without thoughts, we regard as an abnormal condition. We have taken a tradition for a truth and it would be well to inquire how far these values of ours are justified.

Thus far we have discovered that the limits hitherto set by ourselves on the notion of "self" are fictitious, that "thoughts" which in their totality constitute the intellect, need not be the psychic barrier which hems us in.

By this introspective analysis we have subjected our own being to critical examination, and taken in turn each principal part of it, endeavouring to discover whether it is the essential self we are seeking, the foundation of the notion "I."

We have penetrated our inner being, and thus learnt that the outer world, which is revealed to us by our senses, need not be the only condition of our conscious existence

One result of this meditation is that it will eventually enable you to watch how the intellectual, emotional and bodily machine works in reference to your self, to get you outside of your personal self. There is no danger of becoming ultra-introspective

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indulging in abstruse and abstract metaphysics, but I have made the effort because I know that whoever will patiently ponder over these thoughts in the right prejudiceless spirit will eventually be rewarded by a faint inner recognition of their truth, and by a faint intuitive understanding of their significance. It will then be for him to follow up this clue by means of the threefold practice outlined in this book.

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Teacher intentionally kindles through mere personal contact alone the fire of spiritual experience in those who combine aspiration towards it with faith in him ; such a Teacher will give more in a few meetings to a worthy pupil than the latter can gain by many months of solitary plodding

But a genuine Adept is exceedingly hard to find in the modern world, though his feeble imitators are not lacking, and so these pages are penned to give a little help for the student who depends on self-effort alone. If he will read these pages with close keen attention, heartfelt interest and a genuine desire to discover truth at the cost of parting with personal prejudices , if he will absorb their content in such a way that the mere perusal of the book provides him with an inner experience, then he will travel far and achieve an attractive spiritual reward for his trouble.

If these pages are read in the right manner, with profound attention and deep feeling, they may awaken secret forces which are latent in the being of man and then the reading will itself provide the student with a genuine spiritual experience. For it not only pictures a path to the divine self, but may enable the sincere student to travel along this path

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How is the intuition to be awakened?

When the reasoning, thinking intellect subsides its activity, the intuition has a clear field in which to manifest itself. When the waves of thought no longer rise and fall upon the surface of the mind, the latter becomes like a calm pellucid pool in which the sun of intuition can reflect itself without difficulty and without distortion. It is therefore necessary to find some means to reduce the constant agitation of the intellect.

That can be done by a twofold process. The first consists of an effort to direct thoughts along a single channel of a certain kind, i.e. (concentration upon an exalted abstract idea) If you have faithfully practised the meditation-exercise already given, or deliberately yielded yourself up to inspired works of art, then this part of the process will to some extent have inevitably been done and intuitive minutes will be known

The second process entails the control of breathing. The reason is there exists a profound connection between breath and thought. The movements of breath beat time, in a most remarkable fashion, with the movements of thought. Breathing seems quite a simple act and it may appear strange why it should have any effect upon mental action

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alters its rhythm. If these periods are utilized in the manner to be described, carefully following the simple instructions which follow, the resultant effect upon his thoughts will in time be most marked. But it is important that these instructions are not departed from or varied in any way

Here a word of warning against the indiscriminate practice of published Indian Yoga breathings is essential. With a teacher to guide and to protect, the path of Yoga breath control is rendered safe, but without one it is a path of great danger. As an Indian Yogi adept once told me while we sat together in a shady grove: "The ancient masters who knew the different effects of different breathings tell us that through the breath we may make ourselves as powerful as gods equally as we may go down into insanity, incurable diseases and sudden death. You will then understand that where the rewards are so much greater, the dangers are no less great. In our system there are exercises for different purposes and if some are almost harmless, others if wrongly done are potent for grave injury"

The breathing exercise which is given here, however, is a safe one and may be practised without fear. It is the only Yoga exercise of this kind which may safely be practised without the supervision of a teacher, while it is so simple that no one

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twenty minutes as they progress. None should go beyond the last time-limit.

A slow, regular and quiet effort alone is called for; there should be no straining and no violent deep breathing as that would defeat the student's aim; and complete muscular relaxation should reign. He may take it as a sign of success when the breath rhythm flows gently and effortlessly, so that if a feather were held before the nostrils it would not move. Yet if he feels the slightest discomfort or gasping for breath at any moment, he should stop at once and realize that he is practising wrongly.

Breathe through *both* nostrils: any European or American student who practises the alternate nostril Yoga breathing is taking great risks with his health and sanity; leave it alone. Dilated lungs are the least danger. Such artificial and unnatural breathing exercises are usually practised with a view to obtaining psychic powers: they have nothing in common with the natural control of breathing here advocated as a means of quietening the restless fever of thought and making the respiration as peaceful as that of a babe in the womb.

This exercise is based on the simple fact that breathing is a medium between the mind and the body, because it supplies arterialized blood to the brain. To diminish the cycle of breaths is to curtail

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For several months he lay in a seaside nursing home slowly rebuilding his shattered nerves and worn-out body. But it was not until he was given this breathing exercise, that he quickened his recovery and returned to Fleet Street, not merely a well man but a new man. For his entire outlook on life had changed through practising this simple breathing exercise. Henceforth he was able to see deeper into life, to grasp the spiritual purpose behind things and to sense the divine harmony underneath all the discords of modern existence.

This exercise may also be used at other times during the day quite apart from its present purpose. "If, at any time, your self-control is threatened by violent passions or disturbing emotions, of whatever kind, immediately resort to the practice of this breathing exercise until the danger has passed. Its

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CHAPTER VII

THE AWAKENING TO INTUITION

WHEN the student has finished his breathing exercise he is ready for the next stage of this practice, the next effort which he is asked to put forth. If he has practised this exercise properly and with success, he will catch the mind like a bird in a net, its constant flight stopped, its restless activity quiet, so that it lies within the net of breath-control without a flutter of its wings. He should not attempt to revert back to normal breathing by means of an effort, rather should he let his breathing process adjust itself naturally. His mind is now to be withdrawn from concentrating upon the breath and turned away towards the next step—the awakening to intuition. I say *to* intuition advisedly, because the latter is always present, unsleeping, and needs no awakening.

He begins by reverting to the questioning and searching attitude which he adopted during the meditation, but this time his interrogation is addressed, not to the body, desires or thoughts, but

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Intellectual ability and learning are admirable things and adorn a man, but intellectual pride puts up a strong barrier between him and that higher life which is ever calling to him, albeit silently. The intellectually proud sit upon their puny pedestals and wait to be worshipped, when all the while there is a deity dwelling in the deeps of their hearts who is alone worthy to receive worship. The intellectual self seeks to strut like a proud peacock before the admiring gaze of the world, but the true begetter of its talents and creator of our achievements, the one who permeates it with the principle of life and thus permits it to exist, is quite content to remain in the background, unknown and unnoticed by men.

It is the hardest of tasks to abase oneself to a realization of one's own littleness, ignorance and vanity. Yet it is the greatest of attainments for it leads directly to that finding of the divine life which Christ promised to all who would lose the personal life.

We do not need the knowledge and culture of a distinguished mind to understand and appreciate these teachings. The simple and untutored and the primitive can as readily enter into them by an act of faith and prayer, and can more easily enter into the mood of reverence

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cease making any further efforts because it has reached the end of its tether.

The whole process of meditation is simply to select this one higher topic of self-inquiry out of the multitude of ideas, to think firmly upon that alone and of nothing else. Then, when the attitude and quality of concentration are thus strongly developed, the student drops even this special line of thinking, withdraws inward and questions who it is that is thinking. He does not endeavour to obtain an answer by thinking *about* the Thinker; he begins to let all thoughts drop away and to fasten his full attention upon becoming aware of this being who has been covered over by the screen of never-ending thoughts.

During this pause which follows his silent request, he should suspend his thoughts so far as he can by adopting an attitude of "listening-in" for a response. After waiting for two or three minutes, he may repeat his request and then pause again. After the second waiting period of three or four minutes, he may repeat it for a third and final time. Then he should wait patiently, expectantly, for a period of about five minutes, his body still, his breathing slow and quiet, his mind becalmed. This ends his meditation.

The key to a correct understanding of this stage is in remembering that it is the subconscious

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They come quietly, as quietly as the sun steals into a darkened world, so quietly that he is likely to dismiss them as useless fantasies, meaningless thoughts or unimportant imaginings. This would be a great error. The Overself's voice is first heard like a soft breath, and he must pay full heed to it. The gentlest stirrings within the heart must receive his full and undivided attention, and he must look upon them with respect and veneration as ambassadors from a higher realm. For these quiet monitors are but heralds of a dynamic force which is yet to come and which will transfuse and interpenetrate his body with heavenly power.

There are certain subtle tones of feeling, delicate shades of thought, which are usually unnoticed, overlooked or dismissed in ordinary daily life. These disregarded experiences are the very things the meditator must seize upon for culture and development. He will focus all his power of attention on them whenever they appear, striving to yield himself up to them utterly.

In such strange moments he discovers what is almost a second self within. These moments may be rare, he may not even get them except at irregular intervals; but their existence evidences something that is. These ecstatic moments provide a clue to the true nature of man.

Within every single one of us lies well upon well

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in the modern world, then he must continue to adhere faithfully to the instructions given here.

You may considerably assist your development at this stage by beginning to watch yourself at odd times during the day. You may stop yourself, almost unexpectedly, and observe what you are doing, feeling, saying or thinking, letting your self-observation be made in a detached, impartial and impersonal spirit

“*Who* is doing this?”

“*Who* is feeling this emotion?”

“*Who* is speaking these words?”

“*Who* is thinking these thoughts?”

Put such silent questions to yourself as often as you wish, but put them abruptly, suddenly, and then wait expectantly, quietly, for some intuitive inner response. So far as you can, drop all thoughts during this pause. Such introspective inquiry need not occupy you more than a minute or two at odd times. The placid breathing may profitably be induced in conjunction with this exercise in self-observation and self-inquiry.

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The intellect which is repeatedly turned inwards upon this inquiry, yields in time to habit and automatically begins to present our changing *emotions, desires, thoughts and actions to us in the light of the Overself*, i.e. as things which are being experienced within ourselves but are merely mechanical responses to external stimuli

One inevitable result of all these practices will be that your attitude towards things, people and events will gradually change. You will begin to express the qualities which are natural to the Overself, the qualities of noble outlook, perfect justice, the treatment of one's neighbour as oneself.

Turn your mind repeatedly to THAT which is the silent spectator within yourself, and fix it there. This inward-turning is a mental process, an intellectual activity based on an attitude of self-inquiry, but in the stage which follows there is a yielding up of all thoughts to the intuitive feeling which arises from within and which leads one's awareness to the Innermost

You have always been exercising your intellect and emotions, rarely your intuition, henceforth you must begin to change this by bringing your intuitive feeling out of latency as often as possible. It will take time, this search after the right intuition amid the medley of feelings and thoughts which

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will be stepping-stones to the questionless state of the Overself.

You will better understand the *rationale* of the threefold practice—mental quiet, placid breathing and self-observation—by studying the following picture of man's relation to his Overself

We may say that the person exists by virtue of, through the life force of, and by permission of the Overself. The thoughts and desires and resulting actions of a person are normally almost entirely occupied with things belonging to the external world. We may picture the personal self sitting inside man's body and constantly engaged in viewing the world around through the doorway of the five physical sense-organs. The result of this pre-occupation with outside objects is that it is constantly attracted or repelled, as the case may be, busily thinking, desiring, or setting the body to action, *until it has entirely forgotten its place of birth*, which is the Overself. Thus it has fallen into the ironical position of a being which has not only lost all memory of its Father, but actually denies all possibility of the very existence of that Father.

THAT out of which thoughts arise is the true being of man, the true self. There is an unknown and unnoticed gap between every two thoughts, between every two breaths, wherein man pauses momentarily for the flimsiest fraction of a second.

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own soul is not such a rare feat as it may seem. Many prepare the appropriate conditions for it unawares. The artist, when he abstracts his mind from external surroundings in the rapt absorption of his art, does it. He touches ecstasy in a minor measure, forgets himself in his work or vision. It is in this state that geniuses have achieved their finest creations, their best work.

"When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer: it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly, whence and how they come I know not, nor can I force them," Mozart confessed to a friend

The writer lost in reverie over his theme, his mind sunk so deeply in a single train of ideas that he fails to recognise things, persons or events that are about him; the painter so profoundly absorbed in contemplating the picture he is making that he is oblivious of the hours; and above all the musician rapt in the ardour of musical composition, all these are unconsciously practising meditation! But you, who follow the path of self-inquiry, are to do it *consciously*

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As concentration deepens, the external world is slowly forgotten. The mental chambers become empty of every thought save this dominant expectancy of a response from the inner Self. It is a species of self-hypnotism if you like, but it "works," and its value is to be judged by its result

At this stage you will cease all striving, you will not try to achieve anything, but rather allow something to be achieved in you; you will let go of the arguing intellect and yield to faith, to holy expectancy, to sublime trust. For henceforth whatever will be done is to be done by divine action, and not your own. You question things no longer, but submit, questionless, to that which is to appeal to your inmost being. Allow this inner being to take possession of you, to take control of you. We instinctively waver and recoil from that mysterious state wherein the senses are almost suspended, but do not fear.

Thoughts no longer leap through the mind, but die down into a slow procession as the meditative mood deepens.

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Those who spend the years soliciting some intimation or revelation from the august guest within, will with time receive a rich reward. A single glimpse of that mysterious stranger takes the troubles out of our life and puts them under our feet. One hallowed word from his oracular lips bestows a bliss which melts our smaller self in cosmical joy.

The great De Beer diamond fields of South Africa were discovered through a child picking out of the wall of an old Dutch farm a small coloured pebble—out of a wall which, for years and years, had been passed and re-passed many thousands of times by people blind to the treasure at their elbows. How many people have heard the gentle whisper of the inner self or felt its faint guidance, only to brush the visitants aside without understanding; how many have dismissed as mere thoughts the early intimations of diviner life? For this magnetic centre deeply buried in the flesh of man which constitutes his real essential

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the difference—and a very vital one—between the lunatic who stares with glassy eyes into vacancy, and the mystic who stares with shining eyes into seeming vacancy, is the difference between one who has lost the power to think but has not attained to the knowledge of the inner self, and one who has conquered the tyranny of thought and can suspend its action at will, while consciously being aware of his true spiritual self

Thinking as we ordinarily know it is a heavy veil flung over the beautiful face of the divinity within us. Raise the veil a little by letting the mind come to rest as a ship glides into harbour and then is still, and you will perceive somewhat of a beauty you can never forget

Is the conscious cessation of thought really possible? The best answer to this question is an appeal to direct experience. Men who have explored the mind's depths have ultimately reached a point where they have been compelled to stop their search, for their thoughts have been held in a state of suspension. For the mind may be likened to a wheel in constant motion, and thought is simply the automatic result of this motion. When the wheel is brought to a dead end, all thinking is sure to cease.

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The electron theory of modern science provides us with an apt analogy for the Overself. It represents the atom as a miniature universe resembling our solar system. At the centre of this atomic system we have a charge of positive electricity round which a cloud of negative electrical charges (the electrons) revolve. The positive and negative charges equilibrate each other, so that the atom does not ordinarily break up. Thus there is a positive charge at rest at the centre, and there are negative charges in motion round about that centre. The point of Absolute Rest round which the electrons revolve may be likened to the true self, and the electrons to its appurtenances, intellect, emotion, body. The Overself of man is *changeless*.

To find the soul is simply to recur to our original state. Purely divine beings we were in some far-off past, but untrammelled by the coverings of thought and body. Divine beings we are yet, but these later coverings have caused us to forget who we are. Hence to pierce through them is to see our proper self.

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feeling. This is but the initial stage. The last is to have ecstatic union

Little by little, all the impressions of your immediate surroundings will be cut away, the world and its affairs will begin to recede, for when our minds are withdrawn from the hurried turmoil of our times and find their native state in such quiet moments, they become starved with sublime peace.

As we pass into the inmost centre of our mind, we arrive at a state where thought itself stops still, and where there seems at first to be nothing—except the blissful consciousness of Being, the sublime repose in Infinite Existence. This is the self that we really are, the Overself

“Turning away from the world,
I have forgotten both caste and lineage,
My weaving is now in the infinite silence.
Kabir, having searched and searched himself,
Hath found God within him”

—these lines were written many hundreds of years ago by Kabir, the poet-weaver of Benares

When, in our meditations, we seek to trace out the true “I” and not merely sink in slothful acceptance of its manifold masks, we eventually arrive at an inner state which is really the most interesting in life.

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Men may sit in solemn conclave to investigate these assertions, as some will. They would be wiser, however, if they investigated their own selves. For the experience of the eternal being within is its own best proof,

It is in this strange manner that the man who follows this path of self-analytical meditation first awakens to the guidance of his intuition. When he begins to feel the in-leading that will surely arise in the depths of his being; when he begins to yield himself utterly to it and lets it draw his consciousness still further into himself; when he willingly surrenders his personal thoughts, memories and feelings and lets them drown in the impersonal current of life which has mysteriously arisen of its own accord; when he submits to this profound guidance, he will be led right across the threshold of self-knowledge into the inner chamber where his real self awaits him. Once he gets even a momentary experience of this kind, he will understand something of what I mean when I speak of the spiritual being of man. He will realize that he has passed into a wonderful condition without the use of the five senses, without dreaming even; into something that is *real* and transforming, and which he has never before experienced.

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CHAPTER VIII

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WHOEVER has patiently practised the exercises in meditation prescribed in this book and has thereby won through to the inner contact with his diviner self, will no longer need to repeat these exercises in the identical manner which he has heretofore followed. The minute analysis of self which has been the burden of his oft-repeated efforts becomes unnecessary and is eventually replaced by a more or less swift indrawing of the mind, which occurs soon after the student has put himself in silence and composed his thoughts. That is to say, once having arrived at the strong inner conviction that body, emotion and intellect are not himself, he need no longer repeat the technique of self-analysis in his meditations. He need only practise the breathing exercise which has been given and then place his mind in the half-question, half-prayer condition which is described in the preceding chapter. After the necessary pause, the waiting period of humble

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more than conforming to a prescribed system is required. And that final but important ingredient he himself is powerless to supply.

The awakening to spiritual consciousness is something which cannot be developed by a mechanical and measured system alone "Art happens!" declared Ruskin, and so does spirituality. The aspirant carries on certain practices, whether meditation or relaxation, whether self-observation or self-remembering; carries on his effort of Interrogative Reflection, and one day the true consciousness seems to come to him, quietly, gently but surely. That day cannot be pre-determined. It may come early in his efforts, it may come only after long years of disappointing struggle. . . . For it depends upon a manifestation of Grace from the Overself, of a force deeper than his personal will, which now begins to take a hand in this celestial game. Once the Grace gets to work upon a man, there is no escape. Quietly, gradually, but perceptibly, it draws him *inwards*.

The word Grace is not one I am over-keen to use. It has so many unpleasant and inaccurate theological connotations that, could I but find a better, I would throw it aside. But I cannot. So I shall endeavour to assign it a meaning based on ascertainable spiritual experience and not on blind belief.

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the tears flow as copiously as they come forth. Do not hold them back. There is great spiritual merit in weeping for the visitation of a higher power. Each tear will dissolve something that stands between you and the divine union. Never be ashamed of such tears, for they fall in a good cause.

I have heard of few who win Grace without toil and sacrifice. Those few who receive it seemingly as a sudden gift, dropped from the skies, provide no exception to the rule of asking. Only—their aspiration was uttered and heard in former existences, in earlier “body-births.” Destiny has something to do with the matter and provides her detailed explanations of apparently erratic behaviour only to those keen souls who have won her secret.

When Grace arises from our own Overself the latter sets up a certain urge in the heart and begins to lead our thoughts into certain channels. We become dissatisfied with our life as it is; we begin to aspire to something better; we commence a quest for a higher Truth than the belief which has hitherto held us. We imagine—and naturally—that the change is due to a developing mind or, sometimes, to changing circumstance. But not so. Veiled behind the mystery that is Life moves the unseen Overself, the august Being who has thus

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There are certain root experiences which a man never forgets. The first day he loves a woman is one of them. The first day he lands on a foreign shore is another. And the first time he breaks the chrysalis of being to emerge as a conscious spiritual unit, is a third—and it is the greatest of all.

The Overself makes no demand of man other than that he open his inner eyes and perceive its existence. Yet the day of that vision is the most starred day of his whole life, for on that day he stands on the edge of eternity.

For this he was really born, and not merely to mend shoes or traffic in figures. If he misses this divine experience, even then Nature will not let him escape. She is in no hurry, however. Somewhere in her spacious realm she will yet catch him and compel him to fulfil her secret purpose. Whoever engages in such inward exploration is no

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Once we push the gate of the mind slightly ajar and let the light stream in, the meaning of life becomes silently revealed to us. The gate may be open for one minute or for one hour, but in that period we discover the secret and neither weary time nor bitter woe can tear that priceless knowledge away from us. Words fall dead when I try to express that meaning, but whoever has felt his whole inner being melt away and dissolve into the mysterious Infinite during such meditation, as a result of constant aspiration or by the Grace of some Adept, will understand this thought I am feebly trying to convey. In the still presence of that mighty power the soul walks on tip-toe.

It is the most wonderful moment in a man's or woman's life, this illumination of the heart and mind.

Find yourself—your Overself, and you will begin to find the meaning of life and begin to unveil the mystery of the universe. Back of each one of us there is this Overself—calm as an unruffled sky, wise with the gathered experience of Nature's many million years of existence, strong with a power to bring you the best which life has to offer. Let me recall the words of one who was perfectly aware of it—a humble carpenter turned Teacher and who wandered along the shores of Galilee with a few disciples over nineteen

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condition is peace eternal, whose purpose is utterly benevolent and whose existence can never perish.

Yes, this is the true "home-state" of every man.

This timeless condition in which we discover ourselves has been beautifully described by the Hindu Sages as "The Eternal Now."

"Who knows his own nature knows heaven," declared Mencius, the Chinese disciple of Confucius.

The spiritual self of man remains unaltered and undisturbed in all its grandeur, while his personal self passes through the greatest vicissitudes of fortune. It is the indestructible element in him, the silent and eternal witness to whom he must one day come and render homage. It is a light which no power can extinguish. It is man's immortal spirit, benign and tolerant, beautiful and unchanging.

We are as close to the god within as we ever shall be. All we need to do is to know this by experiment and experience. The Soul broods in secret over its great treasure; let us come to rest in the centre of our being and discover the diamonds and rubies that are hid.

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Truth is written into the organism of man no less surely than into the inspired books. In the spacious society of the universe, man possesses a better status than he is yet aware of. Mostly in moments of secret mental quiet are hints brought to him concerning the grandeur which is native to the soul.

This wisdom is the oldest wisdom in the world. Far back as our foremost minds can peer, before the first pen was ever put to paper, ages beyond Buddha and Zoroaster, this single and simple Truth that man can consciously unite with the divine while in the body was taught to those who aspired.

The universality of the experience which I have described is authentic testimony to its reality. The literatures of all lands, the philosophies and religions of all times, bear witness to its truth. It appears in the pages of Grecian Plato and American Emerson; it is to be found in the

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Truth is the spiritual white light which falls upon the prism of mankind, and breaks into the many colours whereby individuals interpret it. Thus, the experience of discovering it is the same the world over: what differs is the interpretation thereof.

Some will object that the world has received a bewildering array of reports from its mystics, from those who claim to have “gone inwards” yet return with varying accounts of what they have experienced, witnessed, felt and understood.

The admixture of religious dogmas and the misinterpretation of personal experiences have produced the bewildering mass of doctrines which, in the lump, is called “mystical.” The inability to adopt a strictly scientific attitude towards the whole matter is responsible for the obfuscation of meditation’s first object. Various “paths” have been devised to secure this object but a multitude of narrow minds have mistaken the path for the goal. Meditation, Yoga, mysticism, etc., have only one fundamental purpose, whatever prejudiced

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personal prejudices or mental bias of the seer—and not to the illumination itself.

Illumination, in its varying degrees, is the same for all men alike. Every mystic rediscovers the same hidden treasure, but his description of it may be lamentably different because his intellectual and emotional interpretation of it is different. *There are degrees of illumination itself*, and in the most advanced degree all seers obtain the same experience and agree perfectly in its understanding. But such are the rare few, the gifted immortals among men.

Temporary glimpses and experiences of a mystical nature have occurred in every century and in every land; but intelligent interpretation of these experiences is not so plentiful. The kindergarten alphabet of every creed has been dragged in to explain them, and that which descends out of the Universal and Infinite is chained to some local symbol.

Our time demands a sensible and spiritual explanation of these things, not an unscientific and religio-materialistic one. Visionaries have recorded perfectly genuine experiences, both psychic and spiritual, yet they differ widely in their results; why? Because the beliefs with which they started out, the past experiences which have influenced their personalities, all these have influenced the

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The simple and beautiful sayings of Jesus carry the burden of Truth's essential message. Study them well and you shall find they correspond completely with the sayings or writings of other men who are at one with the Overself. All the masters of deep spiritual realization speak alike. Only the stumbling followers and professional theologians disagree and differ.

Do you imagine that God showed Himself to men only in those far-off days when Christ stirred up an obscure corner of the Roman Empire or when Buddha walked with the begging-bowl? If God cannot show Himself again to-day, then His power has become strangely circumscribed and the Absolute has suddenly shrunk back to the Finite. Is it not better to believe that He is ready to reveal Himself to all who care to fulfil the conditions precedent to revelation? The Eternal has spoken to man in the past and can speak to him again.

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For Christ descended on earth from a superior planet, which was His real home, and which is far ahead of ours in spiritual consciousness, to bless and serve men by His presence. This descent was His real cross, His real crucifixion. And those who sincerely seek Him may still find Him—in their hearts.

But divinity was not buried in the tomb with Jesus. Have no holy voices spoken since then? Can we not search history for the past two thousand years and find the names of a few men whose presence and look testified to lofty spiritual attainment? Is not the deeper life always extending its sublime invitation to us?

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Why should we hide these simple truths under a complicated jargon? Why should we dress this beautiful figure of Truth in coarse sackcloth. Men like Buddha and Jesus did not disdain to expound their thought in clear-cut phrase and to explain their meaning in simple words. The profounder thoughts can be simply expressed; it is not at all necessary to put them into prose of Cimmerian mystery. Yet there are those who delight in using a vocabulary and phraseology which build barriers between Truth and its mental understanding.

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least make as strong an appeal to his mind as to his heart. The needs of the brain cannot be despised by any spiritual message nowadays, though they should never be permitted to play the despot.

We who have had first-hand experience of the amazing potentialities of meditation must be ready to meet the doubter on his own ground, and to free him who is a prisoner of the primitive conceptions that man is nothing more than his material body and that the world was formed from nothing more than the primeval mud. It is not enough to tell him that our stars burned a little brighter at our births; we must show him how he can kindle a *greater light for himself* too. If still he insists on shutting his eyes to the possibilities of man's life here and now, he will have no excuse for the spiritual darkness which environs him.

Yet there is little that is radically new here, in the historical sense; only the synthesis and proper proportioning of these thoughts will appear fairly fresh with this book; but everything that has not been tried out is new, and these things have not been tried by the world at large.

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CHAPTER IX

THE WAY OF DIVINE BEAUTY

THERE are some temperaments which will find it almost impossible to take up this path of introspective self-analysis. Unfortunately, but not unnaturally, their minds are not built in a way that will permit them to hold their thoughts to such a topic. What, then, are they to do?

The way out of this difficulty for the student unattached to any personal teacher is to begin by yielding himself deliberately to the rhythm of inspired works of art, or by cultivating exalted moods induced in the presence of Nature's beauty, and by widening the feelings of veneration whenever they suffuse the soul through such external agencies.

A picture by a master hand, a poem by one who is sensitive to the spiritual side of life, the playing of a violin by a genius like Kreisler, a walk through gaunt leafless woods in autumn, a contemplation of the glint of June sunshine upon the honeysuckle, or the sight of an old church

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Nature, he is unconsciously reminded of his true spiritual home; so grand, so beautiful is it. He loves the bright clouds in the sky and the golden sunsets, peaceful woodlands and calm lakes, because they remind him of his spiritual origin. Beauty speaks to him with these voices and says: "This grandeur is what you should attain inwardly" They are voices calling to him from his spiritual home.

Sometimes, as in listening to deeply inspiring music, to the noble melodies of Bach or the pure strains of Mozart, for instance, or gazing on some mountain scene, he receives hints of a higher life for man. Music, being the most direct of all the fine arts, provides the truest medium of spiritual expression. But, alas! he knows not the august nature of his visitants and they tremble away. If he had the leisure and desire to attend to the fine thoughts which troop after a moment of awe and wonder, even the average man might gradually become illumined.

For all fine art is but a symbol leading to a shrine of golden fire, all inscribed inspirations are but the filmy veils which cover the naked body of Truth.

Those who try to gather into their minds the world's harvest of printed beauty and wisdom are moved to do so by an instinct that comes from

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The student who finds himself most stirred by great literature should take a book, or some passages from a book, which makes a deep appeal to him, which seems to bring with it a breath of inspiration, which has an unfailingly exalting effect upon him, and which comes almost with the force of a message from higher regions. If he cares for great poetry and can feel its power he may find this inspiration in some haunting poem by Francis Thompson, in a sonnet by Shelley or a lyric by Keats, and in some of those shining verses by my gifted Irish friend, "A. E." (George W. Russell).¹

If he prefers prose there are some delightful essayists to serve him, writers who raise the divine spark of creative art and set fire to the tinder of man's imagination. Emerson's essay on Self-reliance, for example, holds at the least a hundred quotable sentences. He is one of the most original

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The basic thing is to concentrate upon some abstract idea, some phrase or verse, that the student is able to experience within his mind in a powerful way, that echoes deeply within the chambers of his soul. He must choose such passages as have this effect upon him, even though other persons might find only words in them. He must feel the presence of an element of inspiration quite apart from the literary value of the piece or poem.

There are certain paragraphs which stand up like peaks in such books. They are the passages wherein the author has written wiser than he knew, written I should say, under the inspiration of his spiritual self.

Do not read the words alone, read the thoughts behind them also.

Concentrate as you read. Read slowly by letting each word sink into your consciousness. And as it sinks let its meaning pass into your mind also. Repeat each word mentally in such a way that you actually become the author, the creator, as it were. You, yourself, construct the sentences and form the paragraphs—this is creative and constructive reading. It brings grist to the mill of your mind and food for the brain. Such reading literally engraves itself into your thoughts. You have set your own mind to work, to think along the lines and tracks indicated by the author.

The basic thing is to concentrate upon some abstract idea, some phrase or verse, that the student is able to experience within his mind in a powerful way, that echoes deeply within the chambers of his soul. He must choose such passages as have this effect upon him, even though other persons might find only words in them. He must feel the presence of an element of inspiration quite apart from the literary value of the piece or poem.

There are certain paragraphs which stand up like peaks in such books. They are the passages wherein the author has written wiser than he knew, written I should say, under the inspiration of his spiritual self.

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Strangely enough, you find that, in the very centre of the whirlwind, there is a place perfectly calm and untouched. So, too, the man who knows himself attains mental equilibrium and remains unmoved amid the feverish activity of the world. His inmost being is in peaceful undisturbed repose, whatever whirlwind of life swirls around him, whatever work he is doing and whatever thoughts engage his intellect.

Spiritual truth is apt to be considered the prerogative of speculative men, lost in pious or philosophical dreams. That it should be brought within the purview of active men of affairs is a consideration which seems dubious but history has not infrequently turned it to fact.

Is it possible to fuse the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of things divine ? Why not ? Why, for instance, should not the spiritual seeker be conjoined with the man of business ? I know one man who owns a chemical factory in an English provincial town who has attempted this. His entire organization, his laboratory equipment, his office equipment, his advertising methods and his manufactured products are easily among the best and most up-to-date in their line. He treats his many workers on the basis of the Golden Rule.

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from dawn till dusk; the night falls and they are left to reap the harvest of what has been sown. Amid all this teeming field of thought and life—what remains? Even when danger threatens and the physician packs them off on a long holiday, such is their slavery that, though they cannot take the business with them, they are compelled to carry it in their minds; it is now the driver and they are but burdened steeds.

It is a sad but necessary day in a man's life when he finds that, for all his striving, his hands hold little more than withered leaves. At such a moment he may begin to perceive that true spirituality is neither an abstract science nor an abstruse speculation; it is a way of life, a deeper outlook upon the world. It may be painful to arrive at such a day, but it is the prelude to a worth while happiness.

The practical affairs of human life no longer exist to serve them but to tyrannise over them "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind," says Emerson somewhere, and it is true enough of such men. The consciousness that could be set free for a short while each day to acquire the jewel of inward spiritual peace is compelled by the machine they have constructed around themselves to grind itself out in the petty and the puerile

Man, eager to improve his machines, forgets to improve himself.

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worldly life and retreat into monastic places. All the spiritual men do not wear monkish robes. Some wear tweed trousers!

Times change and men with them. The sequestered life which satisfied the life-weary Eastern hermit of the past, will hardly satisfy the aspiring Western man of to-day. He cannot fail to feel somewhat of the spirit of material enterprise which surrounds him. If he is wide-awake he will know its value and consider how it may be conjoined to the higher aim which he has found. He need not lose sight of the practical affairs of life while he is engaged upon the mystical affairs of Truth.

A common idea of one who follows a spiritual path is that he is a pious and peaceful enough sort of man, but devoid of any sort of utility in the scheme of things, and defunct in the faculties of reason and common-sense. That he could link thought with thought in iron strictness, or go out and make a place for himself among the executive, of a mammoth modern business, or command an entire battalion during war, is a notion which provokes satire, although I have known men of this kind who have done these things. He is looked upon as a somewhat feeble and foolish creature, even if a good-natured one.

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Those who believe that meditation rightly conducted in the way prescribed is only a form of sentimental idealism or abstract thinking, make a great mistake. Such meditation gradually liberates a soul-force in man of which he was not previously aware, and which eventually becomes the greatest inspirer of his activities. It is the most powerful precisely because it is the most inward element of his being.

This is a truth, and men like Oliver Cromwell, Abraham Lincoln and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the West, or like Prince Shivaji, the Emperor Akbar and King Asoka in the East, believed it, acted upon it and triumphed.

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between spiritual and material forces. He needs to achieve a balanced life; the life of the spirit sought and found daily and feeding the life of personal activity, and infusing its wisdom and power into his excursions into worldly affairs

If he has regularly practised the meditations prescribed in the earlier pages, if he has constantly tried to gather his thoughts around the quest for the divine self, he will gradually become aware of the spiritual nature within himself which has hitherto been "covered over" I say "gradually" because wisdom does not arrive to a man on some precise day. (It dawns)

This awareness is like the lighting of an electric lamp. A current of spirituality will be switched on with every such return to mental quiet or to self-observation. Let him attend to his duties and take his pleasures just as he did before. There need be no change in them other than what his gradual inner enlightenment will suggest. But then all such changes will be voluntary, not forced on him by an artificial system of external discipline

Once he has established the habit of morning meditation, it becomes a perfectly natural thing to carry on all the day's activities within the spiritual current so started.

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We shall lose nothing by obeying such promptings. There is room in life for the warmth of love as well as for the coldness of ascetic self-denial, for the hubbub of crowds as well as for the quiet of meditation. No modern way of higher living must be too spiritual to perform a few variations on such themes as worldly business and daily work, nor too refined to touch the piano keys of human love and human passion. In the result a time will arrive when the spiritual man will come to look upon everything, every object, event and person, as a manifestation of the Divine, when he will discover that he can have no higher commission than this—to express his Overself in whatever he does and with whoever he contacts.

Let us accept and use wisely all the facts which modern science has found out. Let us live in enjoyment of all the comforts and conveniences its progress can bestow. Let us renounce nothing but the unwise and destructive use we have often put it to, the unbalanced attention we have given it.

But let us also link this external social activity with a deeper life, the life of tranquil thought and inner peace, and thus learn to preserve an unruffled stillness of spirit even amid varied vicissitudes of existence.

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CHAPTER XI

SPIRITUAL HELP IN MATERIAL AFFAIRS

THE criticism will be offered by some who have read all the earlier chapters that these ideas may be very beautiful and profound, but that they cannot be put to any practical use. No notion could be falser, no supposition could be more baseless. The condition of realized spirituality is no nebulous and unsubstantial thing. The spiritual life can be made intensely practical in its application, indeed, properly understood, it is the best possible basis for practical existence. For we must learn to manage our thoughts rightly, because thought is the unseen guide of all our actions.

These far-off spiritual seekings may not appear to have any worth for the man in the street. This is indeed so if control of troubled nerves, peace of mind and quietness of heart, are of no worth. This is so if inner poise and outward self-mastery are of no worth. This is so if divine protection and providential aid in every kind of trouble, mysterious

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the recurring distresses which enter human life from time to time. A higher life has begun for him

Man, ignorant of self, creates his own unhappiness. The world masters him, when he was born to master the world. Life comes down with cruel feet, sooner or later, upon every man who knows few, or many things but does not know himself. Even the dead do not escape. For death is but another form of life

If man would acknowledge his divine possibilities as readily as he acknowledges his animal limitations, the millennium would come quickly. Let us not pray, then, for more power over other men, nor for greater wealth or wider fame; let us pray rather to have this crushing ignorance of our true self removed

There are millions of men and women who are unhappy because they have never learnt this truth, who are the victims of their own deplorable ignorance. Under the polite surface of their lives they are filled with discontents, they are seething with discords, and their hearts are peaceless.

There is an ever-open door which few men deign to approach, but through which all men must one day pass. It is the door to the real self of man, whose unseen portals must be groped for and felt after within the mysterious recesses of the human spirit. It is in those shadowed recesses that both

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Something happens to the man who comes into true self-knowledge and self-ownership. He obtains a changed outlook and sees life from a new vantage ground. He looks out upon the noisy panorama of confused and troubled existence, but keeps a serene harmony within himself. The irritations which once visited him daily, fall away. The passions which once held him in their hard grip, become mellowed and are themselves caught and held by a higher force.

Success in following the Secret Path will eventually detach a man from restless desires, uncontrolled thoughts and unconsidered actions. And though the effort required may seem great, the spiritual reward will match it, for the mysterious condition betokening awareness of the Overself will one day bloom within the aspirant's soul.

In the placid moments of mental quiet we win a degree of control over ourselves which will eventually percolate through to our daily life and permeate all our actions. This result is certain and scientific. Just as a few drops of red litmus thrown into a vessel of water will cause the latter to take on the tint of red, so *all* our external life becomes coloured with an automatic mastery over self, if we will persist in the threefold practice. Cast thy bread of time and effort upon the waters of mental quiet, and it shall be returned to thee an hundredfold.

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I shall now show how your work in the daily periods of mental quiet can be made to bestow a good legacy upon the rest of your day ; how it can put into your hands an efficient weapon wherewith to attack problems or to defend yourself from the menace of misfortunes ; and how it can come to your aid at any time to strengthen you against both temptations and trials. The method is entirely practical.

Begin by looking upon the Overself as an ever-present Intelligence with whom you may commune, to whom you may bring your troubled heart and find peace, and under whose sheltering ægis you may dwell amply protected. Whatever your problem is, do not limit your efforts to intellectual solution only. Do not depend on the unaided reason alone. Take your difficulty into the white light of the Overself and there you will find the right guidance that will finally settle it for you

The rule is : as often as you feel troubled, pained, perplexed, tried or tempted, first practise the placid breathing exercise for two or three minutes, then put to yourself the question :

“ *Whom does this trouble ?* ”

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Unpleasant persons, irritating circumstances and unexpected disappointments, the undeniable effect of any of these can be nullified by making the effort to reach the divine centre of our being, and making it at once. The student must cultivate the habit of promptly turning towards the inner self when conflict with his environment threatens. If he does this faithfully, a wonderful feeling of peace and security will take possession of him, and his mind will pass, frictionless, through the occurrence.

We need to remember that our inmost selfhood is always abiding in an unalterable condition of intense peace. When troubles storm and rage around us, we should promptly repudiate undesirable reactions and attempt to centre our thought on the quest of the spiritual self. For the discovery of the latter will also be the attainment of its happy condition. The good is ever-present, but it must be sought for, felt after and recognized. No time is more suitable to take up this divine quest than when dark events and corrosive anxieties gather together for a descent upon our heads. For by a turning away of the mind into the self-quest we can demonstrate, in a manner at once striking and

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Another friend, W. T. Parish, had been told by doctors that his wife, who suffered from cancer, could not live much longer. Her left breast had already been removed by operation when the right breast was attacked. Parish took his wife away from the nursing home and began to treat her himself, by the methods and power of the spirit. In nine months she was well again. Her case offers a clear and perfect demonstration of the power of the spirit over the body, a significant pointer toward the cure of one of modernity's most dread diseases by the application of antiquity's most sublime therapeutic remedy, divine healing power.

The life-force of the Overself flows continuously into every electron in every atom which goes to form the body. It is the Overself which really gives life to our bodies and sustains them. Without its invisible presence our bodies would instantly collapse dead, pieces of inert matter. The machinery

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It is good to know that we can live all the more securely if we make and keep open some line of retreat into the Overself. We can walk this old earth of ours all the more safely if we take ticket for the stars now and then.

Let us look for the Overself through the mist of unsought tears, through the sunshine of gratified desires, and let us not forget what we really are.

A man is but mediocre until he learns to trust this higher power, the real self, until he makes it a living factor in his outlook and looks always within for its leading.

Believe in the self you know and you are at once limited, believe in the greater self which you really are and you may go on and on to achievement. BE what you have it within you to be.

In your serenest exaltations you will realize this profound truth, *that you have never really parted from God!*

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hopes of the entire world when the war ended has faded and that we are left with a bewildering fog. They have been forced, despite themselves, to become reluctant harbingers of doom. They have to-day become croaking Cassandras prophetically warning humanity of coming woes. We leave the last page of their writings with a feeling of chill and an impression of deep pessimism.

Who that watches the social and political edifices around us crumbling or crashing to the ground can doubt that he is watching the close of a great historical epoch? To-day the tale of history has become the drama of the unexpected; we wait for the next fresh surprise each morning. The long continued Manchu Dynasty has made its exit from Peking, and the country which created the Gold Standard has gone off it. The only certain thing to-day is uncertainty. The caravan of life once wound through the ages like an endless procession, but nowadays it dashes along on high-speed engines.

Mankind to-day is both hungry and haunted; hungry for a better and brighter age yet haunted by the heavy shadows of the past. The world seems willing to try every way but the right way. Troubled by the prospects of another war, perturbed by the chaotic political conditions of every continent, it rushes hither and thither in its quest

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suspended, and not rush to set down judgment upon our age. For there is a plan behind the events which pattern the modern world's life, and unless man has learnt to discern this plan he cannot judge aright.

The powers which guide the universe, which guard mankind and watch over the world, will speak to this century in tones much more forceful than mine and demonstrate their existence through events far more startling than the publication of a mere book. Because we gaze around and see the chaos that broods upon us, the foolish fear that God is dead or absent and that we are lost. Because no hand stretches forth out of the Great Unknown to save mankind from its self-earned sorrows, they imagine that there *is* no hand to help us. God could, if He willed, heal all the sorrows of this planet in an instant of time. But that would be to transform us into automatons, to turn us into machine-made angels. Man, if he is to grow God-like, must do so of his own free will. And the guarantee that he will do so is the presence of a divine spark within himself. There are true voices in the heart—the voices of Hope and Goodwill, and these shall once more be heard.

For the divine instinct in man is ineradicable ; it may be covered up for a time, but it must one day well forth again.

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the mysterious recesses of our own being, it exists giving man a deeper strength and higher wisdom. The man who is wise with the wisdom of himself and strong in its strength has other business in hand than passively waiting for new Armageddons or planetary cataclysms. There is no fear for the morrow for him who lives in the absolute trust, just as the sparrows have no fear for their morrows.

He knows that the night will pass, and dawn, silent and irresistible, will roll back the world's darkness and once more flood it with light. When the truth about the hidden side of the universe and of man is once more unveiled, demonstrated so far as it can be in a scientific and rational manner, then new scientific findings will stagger the most powerful intellects. We shall then build a pillar of higher wisdom which shall rise up into a new and finer age, and we shall testify anew to those eternal spiritual truths which no advance of science, no progress of civilization, no lapse in human character, can ever render obsolete.

Meanwhile, each of us who practises this secret inner way can become a disseminator of the true light, can change himself and thus become fit to change others. It is to such men, inspired selfless instruments, ready to work in the higher service of mankind, that we must look for the liberation of

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